

# Highest Place In Indianapolis

LINN HUDSON

Maybe some of you don't know what or where the tallest structure in Indianapolis is, so for the enlightenment of those who don't know I shall describe my first visit to this pinnacle of engineering ingenuity.

This structure is the new twelve-million-cubic-foot waterless gas holder of the Citizens Gas and Coke Utility, located on Northwestern Avenue. My first opportunity to go up on the top of this holder presented itself while I was visiting a friend of mine at this plant. The chief electrician asked me if I should like to accompany him while he made a routine check of the electrical apparatus on it. I quickly accepted his offer, and my friend, the chief electrician, and I climbed into a truck and drove across the field toward the holder.

On approaching it I grew more and more aware of its huge size and height as compared to my own. Although I had scarcely noticed any wind before, there was quite a gale whipping around the base of the holder. What had seemed at a distance to be an oversized drain pipe turned out to be an elevator shaft that housed a regular-sized elevator, which was to carry us to the top. I was allowed to run the elevator, and after a rise which took almost four minutes, we stepped out on the broad top, which is 386 feet, 8.5 inches above the ground.

The panorama which greeted my eyes was a little frightening at first, but after being assured that the structure upon which I was standing would not blow over, I became more at ease and began to enjoy the scenery. I could look down on

the tall buildings downtown and even the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Circle. The structure on which I was standing was almost half again as tall as the Monument. I had never realized how large Crown Hill Cemetery was until seeing it from there. And I could watch the planes landing and taking off from Stout Field. If I had had field glasses with me, I should have better enjoyed the ball game which was in progress at Victory Field.

We walked all the way around the edge of the top, holding onto the railing for fear of being blown off. The almost flat top is 218 feet in diameter and looked large enough to land a B-29 on. After getting our fill of Indianapolis scenery, we went into a small house on top and entered another elevator, which would carry us down inside this huge monster.

One might believe that it would be impossible to go inside this gas holder without being gassed or without donning a gas mask. But, in reality, there is no gas in the top part where we entered. The huge part of the holder which we see from the outside is only the shell for the inner chamber which rises or lowers as gas enters from the bottom or is taken out. This piston rolls up and down against the sides of the tank and is sealed by three feet of thick black tar. The elevator descends onto the top of the piston, which may be near the top if full or way down if almost empty. If the tank is almost empty, one can go as far down on the inside as one came up on the outside. The elevator is nothing more than a wire cage suspended by a cable from the top, and it continually rocks and sways while travel-



ing. The holder was about one-third full when we went down, and we had a sensation of being swallowed by a large whale as we slowly sank into the dark and shadowy interior. We got out of the elevator and walked around on top of the piston. It seemed like miles up to the little hole at the top where we had entered. There were eight pieces of pipe, cut into different lengths to form musical tones when struck,

which were suspended from a girder. One could play a tune on them which would echo back to him for five minutes. When the chief electrician was through inspecting the inside, we again rode the elevator, which swayed and rocked like a drunken man going up stairs. I was glad to see daylight and fresh air again as we stepped out of the elevator onto the top and took the other elevator to go to the ground.

## Vignettes

The pine trees, like soldiers, had marched to the very edge of the lake's sandy beach and afforded the deer and other wild life that came to drink a perfect camouflage.

from *Her Majesty*  
by Gene Miller

Has man's time not come to have peace settle over all the world? We were chosen to be born in this age, and we will die when we must. Has not our time to kill, to break down, to weep, and to mourn surpassed its appointment? Is it not now time to do some healing, building up, even a little laughing, a little dancing?

from *To Every Thing There  
Is a Season*  
by Jean Farson

It (love) will always exist in some form. It is the cogwheels of a nation, the orb of the universe, and the blessedness of the world. From the little child, who lays his sleepy head on his mother's breast and drowsily falls to sleep, to the tough little bear cub, which crawls up

to its mother for protection and warmth, love is the mainstay which makes life worth working for, worth fighting for, worth dying for, and above all, worth living for.

from *Pertaining to Love*  
by Joan Schumacher

Though in my fits of temper I say much which is better left unsaid, I sometimes feel that I am more fortunate than those people who believe themselves tolerant because they are masters of their tempers. I hold no grudges, and while my intolerance causes many quick blazes, there is no bed of coals where a smoldering flame may be nourished.

from *Tolerance*  
by Jane Butler

Her character seems to indicate conviction that her place is as a guiding hand to fate. She feels horribly cramped that a lifetime is only one hundred years, and wants her epitaph to read, "Died of extreme old age."

from *Dynamic Dorothy*  
by Winifred Ham